

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

How sustainability paves the way to prosperity – for both individual companies and the region

Elected officials and the business community increasingly see sustainability as the key to the region's economic growth. It can benefit individual businesses by reducing their annual operational and maintenance costs, enhancing the health and wellbeing of their employees, hence reducing healthcare costs, while improving their ability to recruit and retain talent. It benefits the community by preserving and enhancing local natural resources and by making the region a desirable place to live. The Milwaukee Business Journal recently assembled a panel of experts to explore what we have accomplished in terms of sustainability, how we compare to other areas and what we can do to make additional improvements.

TABLE *of* EXPERTS



THERESA LEHMAN
Director of Sustainable Services
Miron Construction

As the director of sustainable services for Miron Construction, Theresa's role is to inspire sustainability throughout Miron's culture and work with clients and design/build partners to integrate sustainability into the design and construction of buildings. Named as ENR magazine's top 20 under 40, and honored as a LEED Fellow in 2012, Theresa is the world's youngest LEED Fellow. She is credentialed as a LEED AP BD+C, ID+C, WELL AP, Fitwel Ambassador, LEED Faculty, and WELL Faculty.



ERICK SHAMBARGER
Director of Environmental
Sustainability
City of Milwaukee

Erick Shambarger is the Director of Environmental Sustainability for the City of Milwaukee, where he leads the Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO). ECO was created by Mayor Tom Barrett. He oversees the City's Refresh Milwaukee Sustainability plan and a robust set of sustainability programs for homeowners and businesses. More at Milwaukee.gov/eco



CHRIS PIER
Director of eCycling Operations
Goodwill Industries of Southeastern
Wisconsin

Chris' background started nine years ago, when he assisted in building a company that became the largest electronics recycling firm in the Rocky Mountain Region. Pier built a relationship with Goodwill over those years and decided to join the Goodwill Denver team to show how Goodwill could be a leader in electronics recycling. He has assisted with developing the same program at several other Goodwill's and is regarded as an industry expert.



RONALD TATUM
Director of Supply Chain
Goodwill Industries Southeastern
Wisconsin and Metropolitan Chicago

Ron oversees Logistics and Supply Chain Operations for Goodwill's Retail Division, which is the largest in the United States. Tatum holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Organizational Leadership from Indiana Tech University, and is currently concentrating on his MBA in Supply Chain at the University of Whitewater.

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MODERATOR: SUSTAINABILITY IS A TERM THAT IS USED IN MANY DIFFERENT CONTEXTS. HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE SUSTAINABILITY AND WHAT ARE ITS KEY COMPONENTS?

THERESA LEHMAN: Sustainability is all about enhancing the health and well-being of people, minimizing environmental impacts and promoting prosperity.

ERICK SHAMBARGER:

Sustainability means thinking about the long-term impact of the actions you take today. You cannot have sustained, long-term economic growth without considering your impact on the environment.

“We have to transform businesses’ fears about the costs of sustainability into an educated understanding.”

RONALD TATUM
Goodwill Industries
Southeastern Wisconsin and
Metropolitan Chicago

CHRISTOPHER PIER: Being sustainable is the ability to balance life with the ecosystem in which we live to make sure we can both thrive and flourish.

RONALD TATUM: There are three pillars to sustainability – people, planet and prosperity – and they are all equally important.

MODERATOR: WHY DO YOU BELIEVE DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY IS IMPORTANT FOR THE MILWAUKEE AREA?

TATUM: The city of Milwaukee is an attractive place to be from a sustainable-economy standpoint and that presents a huge opportunity as we build relationships with the growth opportunities coming to the Milwaukee area, like Foxconn.

SHAMBARGER: Sustainability is very important in attracting businesses and young talent. People are making decisions on where to live based on the quality of life, which includes the natural resources. We also have an economic opportunity as natural resources across the globe become more constrained. There’s a huge demand to use

water and energy more efficiently and that gives Milwaukee a big opportunity to export the technologies being developed here through the Water Council, the Midwest Energy Research Consortium and the strong cluster of companies focused on energy efficiency.

MODERATOR: MILWAUKEE IS BECOMING KNOWN AS AN INTERNATIONAL HUB FOR WATER TECHNOLOGIES AND FRESHWATER RESEARCH. HOW DOES THAT FIGURE INTO THE REGION’S SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS?

SHAMBARGER: The Global Water Center and the Water Council are important to what we are trying to do as a city to expand economic opportunity. We created a Water Centric City Initiative to demonstrate Milwaukee’s leadership in managing our water resources in a sustainable and resilient way. We have a lot of academic support, including the School of Freshwater Sciences at UWM. We are an innovating city in the UN Global Compact-Cities Programme, which allows us to get the word out internationally. The city is working on policies to use green infrastructure to better manage stormwater runoff, and we are working with the Harbor District to redevelop that whole area to attract companies focused on water and sustainability.

LEHMAN: Milwaukee’s participation in the UN Global Compact program is a really big deal. There are seven areas of sustainability being looked at worldwide. Only two of those sites are in the United States. One is Milwaukee, which is focused on water. The other is San Francisco, where they are focused on transportation. The Global Water Center’s public/private partnership is being viewed as a national model to grow Milwaukee’s research and entrepreneurial reputation in water technology. Having received the federal designation as a water technology cluster has enabled the program to receive federal funding for small businesses to leverage themselves to commercialize new technologies and bring them to the market, thereby creating opportunities to showcase innovation and continued leadership, as well as grown the regional economy.

TATUM: Milwaukee really is a pioneer and when you pioneer something it brings a lot of attention. It is a matter of making sure everyone understands and appreciates what is going on here.

MODERATOR: WHERE IS MILWAUKEE ON THE SUSTAINABILITY SPECTRUM COMPARED TO OTHER CITIES? WHERE ARE OUR STRENGTHS AND WHERE ARE OUR WEAKNESSES?

LEHMAN: Milwaukee has a fantastic reputation for our freshwater technologies, and Wisconsin has a great reputation when it comes to protecting the environment and creating environmental standards and regulations. The Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and Earth Day all have their roots here.

SHAMBARGER: Under Mayor Barrett, we’ve become leaders in energy policy and building efficiency. We have a PACE financing program that helps building owners finance energy-saving improvements. We have our Better Buildings Challenge and our Water-Centric City Initiative. Look at the progress we have made on water quality. Twenty years ago, you would not see people kayaking on the rivers downtown. We need to further enhance and integrate transportation throughout the region. And we need to continue to work with businesses to show them that sustainability is a business opportunity that needs to

be part of their corporate culture. **PIER:** A lot of initiatives I have seen in other parts of the country have been driven with state partnerships. I have noticed a lack of conversation in the local recycling community about grants or innovation. I thought that was interesting, having come from Colorado, where an annual grant program spurred competition for new recycling infrastructure and technology. I think state governments should consider grants as incentives for innovative and sustainable technologies.

“Earlier this year, we drastically reduced the permit fees associated with installing solar panels.”

ERICK SHAMBARGER
City of Milwaukee

SHAMBARGER: I think it is important from an economic,



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Director of E-cycling Operations at (414)847-4196**

equity and inclusion perspective to place companies in areas where people need jobs the most and where there is existing infrastructure. Century City business park, for example, is located in an area that needs jobs. It is on land that has been recycled from prior industrial uses, so it already has the necessary infrastructure in place. From a sustainability perspective, it makes sense to attract companies there.

“The profits we generate go back into community-based programs and services.”

CHRIS PIER
Goodwill Industries of
Southeastern Wisconsin

MODERATOR: WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION DOING TO PROMOTE AND/OR SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY IN SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN?

PIER: Goodwill is the original reuse and recycle organization. We have been recycling for the last 100 years – long before it was cool. It is where we got our roots, and continues to be a big part of our Mission today. We have evolved a lot over the years as we address changing community and business needs, but the same core competency still drives us. We focus on long-term sustainable business models like recycling and providing affordable goods to the public, and the profits we generate go back into community-based programs and services. For the business community we have several professional services, including our E-Cycle program that helps corporations recycle their used electronics securely and responsibly. For example, we recently announced a new partnership with the Green Bay Packers that will make Goodwill E-Cycle the recycler of all the team's computers, tablets and other electronics.

LEHMAN: It is amazing what Goodwill does. They recycle. They create jobs for people. They educate people on how to manage their finances and reduce their debt. They are much more than recycling. They are really focused on sustainability – both for the environment and for people as well.

TATUM: Absolutely. We touch on all three aspects of sustainability – people, planet and prosperity. We have provided more than 6,000 jobs for disabled and disadvantaged people who seek greater independence. Last year, we kept 81 million pounds out of landfills. Currently, a primary focus of ours is on developing strategic relationships with the community, governments and businesses.

MODERATOR: WHAT IS MIRON DOING?

LEHMAN: Sustainability is one of Miron's six key drivers and our Building Green mission is to demonstrate, by example, the benefits of the triple bottom line – people, planet and prosperity. We spend a lot of time educating and demonstrating practical solutions. We have 152 LEED-, WELL-, and Fitwel-credentialed professionals. We use our own LEED certified buildings as teaching tools. We can talk specifically about upfront costs and lifecycle costs, because we have first-hand experience with them, and we can share how a building can enhance the health and well-being of people.

SHAMBARGER: The City of Milwaukee's Environmental Collaboration Office (ECO) implements the City's ReFresh Milwaukee sustainability plan and offers six core programs. The ones most geared toward businesses include the Better Buildings Challenge, which helps building owners set energy efficiency goals; and PACE financing, which helps them pay for energy-saving improvements over time. Earlier this year, we drastically reduced the permit fees associated with installing solar panels. We will be installing a megawatt of solar power on city buildings this year. Our HOME GR/OWN program is converting vacant lots into parks and community green spaces. We have put a lot of effort into greening up and beautifying North Avenue in the last two years to make it a more vibrant commercial corridor.

MODERATOR: BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION WERE AMONG THE FIRST AREAS TO

EMBRACE SUSTAINABILITY. IS THAT MOMENTUM STILL GROWING? WHAT ARE THE TRENDS AND EMERGING PRACTICES?

LEHMAN: Sustainability in building design and construction continues to grow, but the focus has shifted from energy efficiency to enhancing the health and wellbeing of people. People's health is based on the quality of the air they breathe, the food they eat, the water they drink, the quality and quantity of sleep they get, and how much they move (exercise). Because people spend 90 percent of their time in buildings, the built environment needs to be designed to enhance human health and well-being. Doing that improves the health of the community as well. Let me give you an example: We worked with the Lake Mills School District to renovate and add on to its middle school, which was overcrowded and had safety and security issues. We replaced the existing heating system with a geothermal heating and cooling system that saves the school \$85,000 per year in energy costs alone. But, better than saving energy, the shop teacher said he no longer needed to take allergy medication, which he had taken for the last twenty years. After completing the middle school project, we worked with Milwaukee-based architect Eppstein Uhen Architects (EUA) to design and build a new elementary school on the same site as the former 60-year-old elementary school. All of the materials were zero- or low-emitting, meaning there was no off-gassing of VOCs, which cause cancer and trigger respiratory issues. Wiggle furniture was purchased, allowing children to expel energy while concentrating and not disturbing others, which reduced the number of behavioral problems that had previously been encountered. The team also performed acoustical modeling to ensure all students could hear the teacher, no matter where they sat in the classroom. After the first year students and teachers were in the new school, absenteeism declined 15 percent, asthma and allergy medicine distribution declined 75 percent, and the number of communicable diseases plummeted 425 percent. In addition, student test scores increased. Working with local utilities and Focus on Energy, we secured \$125,000 in grants to put in a solar thermal hot water system, a green roof and other elements that made the school a teaching tool for students. Most importantly, the healthy and



SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Our “Building Green” mission is to lead by example to demonstrate the benefits of the triple bottom line—people, planet, and payback—through education, corporate culture, and practical construction solutions. **This, is Building Excellence.**

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high-performance reputation of Lake Mills Middle and Elementary Schools helped prompt an economic revival. In designing the school, demographics were reviewed. Growth in the Lake Mills community had been stagnant for the last 20 years. The elementary school was designed for 650 students, yet only 535 students were enrolled in the elementary school. Word got out at how amazing the new schools were and parents from other school districts started open enrolling their children in Lake Mills. After a couple of years, Lake Mills had to stop open enrollment because the school had reached capacity. New families were moving into the community, and new subdivisions had to be opened because of the new home growth, thereby expanding the tax base for the Lake Mills community. Today, an analyst for the school district is telling the community to expect a 6 percent growth annually. It's impressive that healthy, high-performing schools can attract new families to spur growth in a community, especially one that had previously had minimal growth over the last 20 years. Now the district is having to look at what to do with their high school as well as potentially construct a new primary school (pre-K and kindergarten) to alleviate overcrowding. Lake Mills should be proud, they have served as a role model for other schools throughout the world. This is a great example of balancing the triple bottom line: enhancing the health and well-being of people, reducing the environmental impact, and increasing prosperity.

MODERATOR: WHAT ABOUT EMERGING TRENDS?

SHAMBARGER: Theresa's correct in that there's a greater focus on enhancing health. Another area is reducing the use of single-use plastic and excess packaging that can end up in our lakes and rivers. Although plastic is designed to last a very long time, most of it is used for 15 minutes or less before being discarded.

PIER: Developing internal and external corporate recycling programs is becoming the norm. We now have a division focused on commercial relationships and how we can help the business community be more sustainable – whether that is through our professional recycling services, document destruction, or managing and staffing a business' recycling operation so they can get as close to a zero-waste goal

as possible. If an idea fits within "People, Planet, Prosperity" that Ron mentioned earlier, we would love to help.

MODERATOR: WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST HURDLES IN GETTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO MOVE FURTHER ALONG THE SUSTAINABILITY SPECTRUM?

LEHMAN: Education is absolutely key. People don't know what they don't know. They will make sound decisions when they are well informed.

TATUM: Absolutely. We have to transform businesses' fears about the costs of sustainability into an educated understanding. The Lake Mills example Theresa provided is an excellent example of what we need to share. We have to do a better job of educating and engaging the business community. The more we share, the more we will increase the networking opportunities.

SHAMBARGER: It doesn't take a lot of money to look for alternatives, but it does take some thoughtfulness. And it takes collaboration, which is our middle name.

PIER: Many businesses think sustainability means major expense or major change. Sustainability does not have to be expensive. It is not an all-or-nothing process. A good first step is to talk with your employees and explore ideas that will provide a cost savings for your company and will be something that your employees are passionate about. Go down that path, master it, then reconvene and discover more paths.

MODERATOR: WHERE CAN A COMPANY GO IF IT IS INTERESTED IN SUSTAINABILITY BUT DOES NOT KNOW WHERE TO START?

SHAMBARGER: There's the Better Buildings Challenge. Its website is city.milwaukee.gov/bbc. Companies can get a free assessment that will walk them through the steps to become more energy efficient. Start with a small step like that, and once you get going you will see more and more opportunities. There are plenty of resources listed on our website, and we are always happy to talk to businesses. In addition, MMSD has started a Fresh Coast Guardians resource center that provides technical assistance and grant opportunities to buildings that want to put in green infrastructure. The UWM Industrial Assessment Center

provides free energy assessments for industrial buildings.

"It's impressive that healthy, high-performing schools can attract new families to spur growth in a community."

THERESA LEHMAN
Miron Construction

LEHMAN: Business should engage their employees. They will identify challenges and locate resources. You can talk with local utilities, Focus on Energy and your local community (government) agencies. There are also many websites that can help businesses locate sustainable programs. If a company is interested in incentives for energy efficient technologies, systems and equipment, they

should go to DSIRE (www.dsireusa.org), which identifies all national, state and local energy-efficiency incentive programs. If a company is looking to create a healthy, high-performing building and needs a "road map" to get there, they can go to new.usgbc.org, www.wellcertified.com, fitwel.org. There are also free government resources related to the community, including www.epa.gov and dnr.wi.gov.

PIER: Goodwill can be a great resource, especially when it comes to reusing and recycling. Our products and services have all been developed based on business and community needs. It is critical for us to know what needs are out there, so we can help shape current and future services to meet those needs.

TATUM: We are always happy to give businesses a tour of our facilities to explain our recycling services.

SHAMBARGER: Also, I think it is important for the business community to network, to ask each other what they are doing to work together to raise Milwaukee's profile on sustainability.



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